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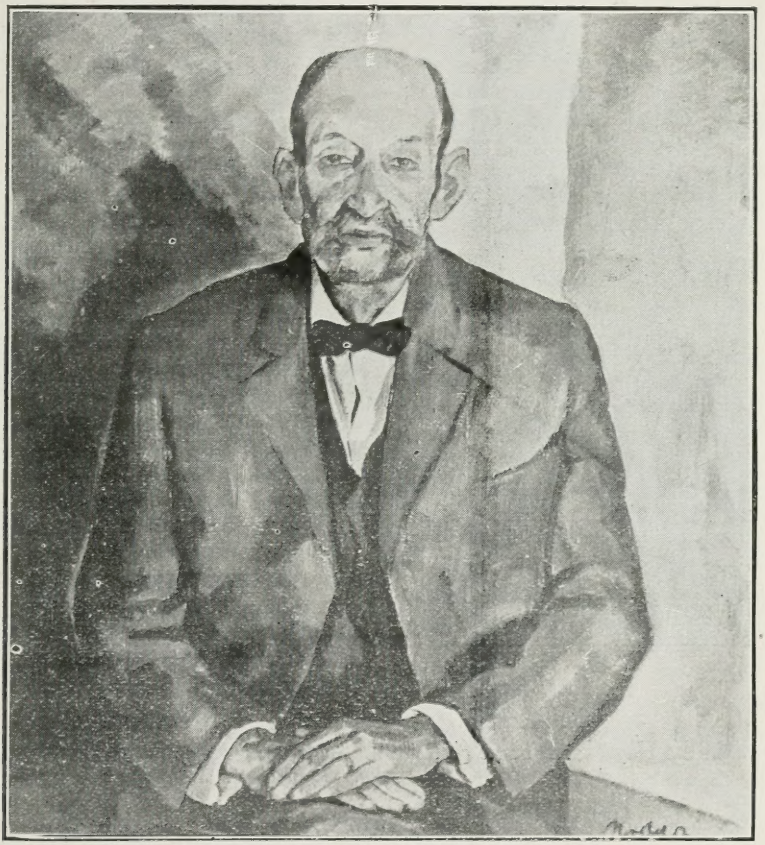
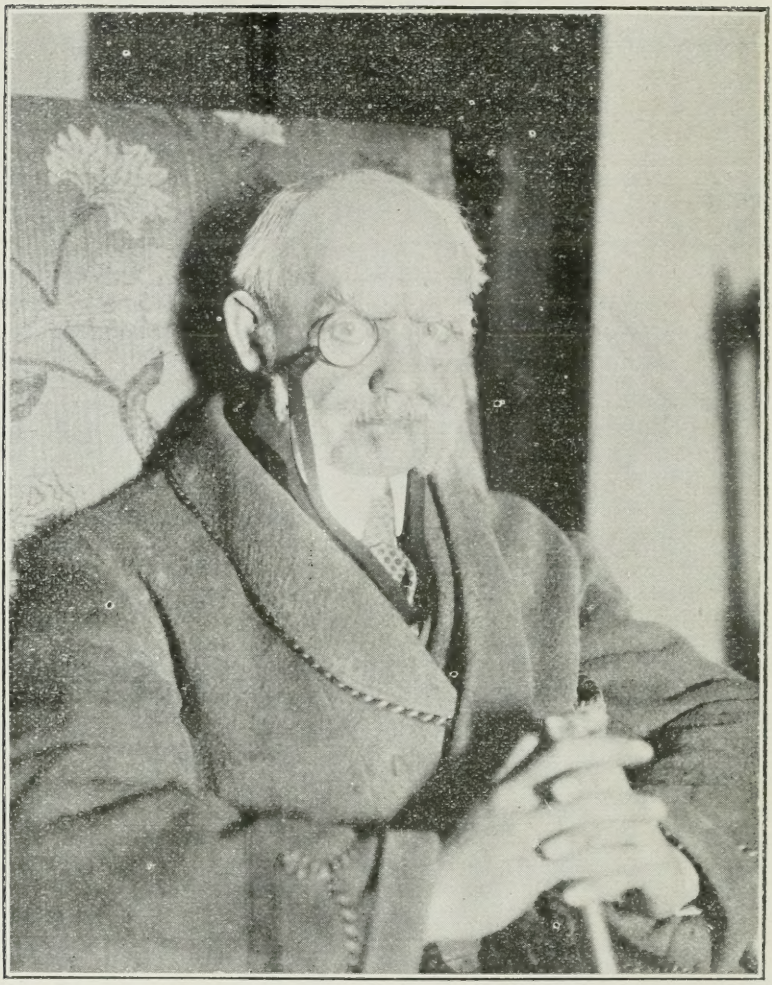


AN OLD TIMER

From Painting by B. J. O. Nordfeldt



Photograph by Wesley Bradfield

The Artist, B. J. O. Nordfeldt, as "Grumpy,"
in the play of that name given in the Museum by the Drama League

DISSERTATION ON MODERN PAINTING

By Marsden Hartley

IT is for everyone to comprehend the significance of art who wishes so to do. Art is not a mystery, never has been, and never will be. It is one with the laws of nature and of science. Art is the exact personal appreciation of a thing seen, heard, or felt in terms of itself. To copy life is merely to become the photographer of life, and so it is we have the multitude in imitation of itself—one in the undeniable position of copying another one, without reference to the synthetic value of imitation. It is the privilege of the artist then to reform his own sensations and ideas to correspond according to a system he has evolved, with the sensation drawn out of life itself. It is a matter of direct contact which we have to consider. There can be no other means of approach. To illustrate externals means nothing, because the camera is the supremely edifying master of that. It means nothing whatsoever for a painter to proceed with ever so great a degree of conventional flash and brilliancy to give sensations which nature or the mechanical eye of the camera can much better produce. The thing must be brought clearly to the surface in terms of itself, without cast or shade of the application of extraneous ideas. That should be, and is, it seems to me, the special and peculiar office of modern art; to arrive at a species of purism, native to ourselves in our own concentrated period, to produce the newness or the "nowness" of individual experience. The progress of the modernist is therefore a slow and painstaking one, because he has little of actual precedent for his modern premise. It must be remembered that modern art is, in its present socalled ultra state, not twenty years old, and it must likewise readily be observed that it has accomplished a vast deal in its incredibly prodigious youthfulness.

Art in itself is never old or new. It began with the first morning. That the eye trained accurately to observe its essence is of such recent existence, may be the real object of surprise. All the great races had a mission to perform. They had race psychology to perfect, and. therefore, art with them was allied with all the elements of symbolism. Symbolism can never quite be evaded in any work of art because every form and movement that we make symbolizes a condition in ourselves.

We derive our peculiar art psychology from definite sources, and it is in the comprehension of these sources, and not in the imitation of them, that we gain the power necessary for the kind of art we as moderns wish to create. We are intrigued into the consideration of newer qualities in experience, which may or may not be eternally valuable, yet may hold contemporary distinction. We must think ourselves into the Egyptian consciousness in order to understand the importance of art to the Egyptians, and we must likewise perform the same function as regards our own appreciation of art, the art of our modern time.

It will be found that there is a greater interest in this newer type of pristine severity than in the more theatric and dramatic tendencies of the romanticists. It is no way to disparage a romanticism as fostered by Delacroix, but we are finding a perhaps greater degree of satisfaction in the almost flawless exactitudes of an artist like Ingres, whose influence in his time was doubtless considered (certainly was considered by Delacroix and his entourage) detrimental in its coldness and its seeming severity and lifelessness. Art is

not a comfortable or an emotional isssue. It is a stimulating intellectual one. We have learned that Ingres was not cold, but clear and durable as crystal, and we in our day are made to admire the indescribable loveliness of steel and glass for the strength and unadorned splendor they contain in themselves, devoid of the excessively ornate incrustation of art as applied by the Orientals and by the artists of the Renaissance. With them it was worship of ornamentation. Surfaces were made to carry heavy burdens of irrelevant beauty. Today we have admiration for the unadorned surface itself. We have a timely appreciation for the mechanistic brilliance and precision of this era; we care for the perfect line and mass, the unornamented plasticity of workable objects, such as the dynamo and the steam drill, as well as the cool and satisfying distinction which electricity contains.

We may say then that in matters of experience generally all progress is a plunging toward discovery. With amazing yet typical rapacity the world of Europe, that is, the major part of it, has turned to art for its speedy salvation, and the revival of modern painting alone in Europe is, while utterly characteristic, nevertheless startling in its reality. The peoples of Europe know through the experience of a majestic background the importance to racial development of the development of art. They are perfectly aware that the only solution of their civic problem is to come through the redirection of public interest toward matters of taste and cultivation. For it is through art and art alone that peoples survive through the centuries. Their arts have been their most important historical records.

The question on the lips of the rest of the world is naturally: Why is there no art in America? There is already a well defined indication that America may one day possess a literature of its own. We need not depend entirely upon our own private exotics such as Emerson, Poe and Whitman, who, it can be said, would never have sprung from any other soil. The last few years have shown that America has a type of poetry all its own, a poetry that is as peculiar to it as the Acropolis to Athens. There is an indication that the art of painting is quite conspicuously in the ascendant in America. Of these two arts in our own country much more indeed can be said than can be paid for music and for the drama, in which we seem but for a small and slowly emerging group to be practically negligible as creators. It is because we have not yet learned the practical importance of true artistic sensibility among us. Yet there is possibly more hope for the arts of poetry and painting because they are the last to be bought and sold as valuable merchandise. It is in this, possibly, that their salvation lies, as it is in freedom that all things find perfection, in freedom that all functions find their truest gifts for expression.—The Nation.

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Gift to Pennsylvania Museum

Eldredge R. Johnson of Philadelphia has presented to the Pennsylvania Museum, two of the six sculptured horses which embellished tbe tomb of Emperor T'ang T'ai Tsung, the so-called Napoleon of the East, who though of humble origin, finally became emperor in the seventh century. Six of his war horses were sculptured for his tomb and it is two of these that have found their way to America while the remaining four are considered priceless historic monuments by the Chinese, whose retention they would defend with their life blood.

SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION

Arctic Exploration.

Dr. Donald B. MacMillan will sail shortly on a two years exploration trip to the Arctic regions.

A LOST CIVILIZATION

THE dedication of the California building in Balboa park tomorrow afternoon will mark a new era in the history of civic activities. This structure and the purpose to which it will be devoted are in the nature of corner stones laid in the fonndation of a magnificent edifice. The state has already expended $300,000 in the erection and decoration of the building, and it stands superb amid the clustered beauties of the park, a monument unique in its composite architectural features and a fitting repository for the priceless treasures of an ancient and cultured civilization of which the modern world has buta vague and uncertain knowledge.

Upon the facades of the building comprising the California quadrangle is written the history of more than half a millenium; within the walls of these buildings is the record of a civilization older than the pyramids, a civilization which perished before the conquistadores of Old Spain brought this wonderfully beautiful architecture to the new world and planted it beside the towers of Palenque, the temples of Chichen Itza, and the palaces of Uxmal.

The California State building is the dominant architectural feature of the park. By reason of its eminent situation it surpasses in the impressiveness of its dignity, and beauty of structure any of the cathedrals and palaces from which it has derived the elements of its artistic composition. It is in its general effect an exemplar of the Spanish renaissance, the general style being of the eighteenth century cathedrals of Mexico and Central America. Back of this ancestry is an artistic lineage conceived in the genius of Spain, Italy and the Saracen. The combination under the guiding hand of an American artist is a masterpiece of symmetry, proportion and adornment. There is nothing comparable with it in any country, because it is the product of one man's inspiration from diverse material each beautiful in itself but supremely beautiful in this combination.

The interior of the building is in consonant harmony with the presentment of the historic exterior. The color is toned to the glow of the desert twilight, and under the spacious dome stand massive replicas of Mayan monumental art vividly reminiscent of a civilization of high culture lost in the welter and turmoil of accumulating centuries.

Here, too, the hand of the artist, whose vision brooks no horizon has painted the story of that lost and almost forgotten civilization-the frescoes of Carlos Vierra depicting the ancient ruins of Quirigua, Copan, Tikal, Palenque, Chichen Itza, and Uxmal; the panels and murals of Henry Lovins reproducing the colored statuary of the temples of Yucatan and the mythology of a vanished race; and the sculptured frieze in low relief by Mrs. Jean Beman Smith, portraying in sixteen heroic-sized panels many of the activities of the Mayan people, their domestic vocations, their artistic occupations, their religious ceremonials and sacrificial rites, their superstitions and their festal recreations.

Under the direction of Dr. Edgar Hewett it is the intention to gather within this magnificent temple of science the best results of archaeological research on the American continent, as the explorers and excavators of Europe and Asia have gathered the remains of other ancient civilizations of Egypt, Babylon, Crete, and Troy. Of this material San Diego will possess the only complete record, and it can never be duplicated.-The San Diego (Cal.) Union, February 18, 1921.

Brown University has completed the $10,000 Nathaniel French Davis fund, in honor of Professor Davis, for 41 years teacher of mathematics in the University.

IT IS WRITTEN

The International Studio.

Joseph Pennell contributes to the February number of "The International Studio" a scathing, in fact, savage attack on Fitzroy Carrington, Curator of Prints in the Boston Museum, because of a widely heralded find of "forty undiscovered Whistlers" in the Maryland Institute and School of Art at Baltimore. Some of the chips incidentally, fall far afield, when the noted artist, for instance, says: "There is no art criticism on the North American Continent, nor any art critics save two or three. Not only are there few art critics, there are but two or three Directors or Curators in the United States of America who have been properly trained or whose word on the subject of prints is of value." It is intimated that the Maryland Institute has kept the Whistler treasures entrusted to it "until recently in a state of incredible neglect and confusion," a charge which may have wider application to various institutions and socalled collections in the United States. However, the editorial rejoinder in the same issue, to Mr. Pennell's criticism, indicates that Mr. Pennell erred in his premises even though he may be correct in his deductions from the text he fashioned himself. Ameen Rihani presents an appreciative critique of the work of Ernest Lawton under the heading "Landscape Painting in America," accompanied by three reproductions including "Segovia" painted in Spain. "As an chievement in color, it leaves little to be desired. The high note in the symphony echoes deep and wide; the very rocks seem to respond to the pink adobes of the city's roofs; and the underglow throughout is superb." John Winstanley in "The Artist and the Paint Pot, a Psychological Induction," explains why ordinary, realistic, photographic painting, even though it be the picture of a nail sticking out of a barn door, is popular, while "a crowd jeers as it is told, at what it cannot understand, and at what it considers as pretense in anyone who affects to see or think differently from itself," even though the picture it jeers at is a real work of art. He calls the ideals of the crowd "conventionally commonplace" and asserts that "business has found it profitable to toady to common weaknesses" "till vanity not decency, sentimentality not sentiment, levity not wit, sensation not pleasure, allurement not love, all sometimes legal tender with the crowd, have been exalted to the dignity of an established currency."

Speaking of the real artist the writer says: "Dissatisfied with things as they are, he becomes one of the band of eternal pioneers. * * For him the material world is not the final word, and a mere reproduction of a rock strewn hill, a watered and fruitful valley, or the physical characteristics of the model; each arranged according to certain 'rules' of composition; is not sufficient. He considers art as the means for communicating the inexpressible, not for the stating of physical facts—a something which composers, being through the very nature of things practically beyond the reach of realism —knew from the beginning. Under the normal characteristics of the visible world the artist senses others, existing in a kind of artistic fourth dimension, and it is these he tries to express." The critic concludes that "the paths indicated are not parallel but divergent, and that followed consistently, they part the painter and the artist immeasurably." Henry Tyrell writes of "Arthur B. Davies: a Muralist in Prints," illustrating his essay with many reproductions. Then follow the usual reviews and news notes, including an extended, illustrated description of "Spanish Paintings at Burlington House," "Piety and Alms" by Jose M. Rodriguez Acosta, being reproduced beautifully in colors.

Poetry for February.

Again we praise the little past, praise
what is done;

Cling to the days we've lost,
And lose the hour we've won.

Thus Marion Strobel sings in eight little songs she has gathered into a garland, "That Year," printed in February "Poetry." Somehow, these songs of weariness and futility seem to sound the key note of the entire issue of the magazine, which in the words of Horace Holley again and again reminds the reader:

Of life forgotten in the greed to live.

In a magazine of poetry, of course, form should receive the first consideration, but in this instance it is the protest, the rebellion, the thundering of clenched fists against time-worn but thus far unyielding standards, which command first attention. However, that is only upon first blush. "The poems interest, they stimulate, they comfort, they intrigue, they wake the gamut of emotion, and they seem to satisfy. Till suddenly a poem comes with this curious quality of immortality, and there is a sensation deep in one's subconscious self as though a clamor of voices had ceased suddenly and a little bell had rung somewhere in a deep silence." Much of the joy in reading "Poetry" each month after all is in the music fully as much as in the surprise of discovery, in the rhythmic cadences expressing thoughts that until then seemed to lie too deep for words, in sonorous periods which because of their music carry more and deeper meanings than even the poet divined. "Magic of utterance will make a great poem." Harriet Monroe, the editor, in her charming critiques, recalls that "Poetry is essentially an oral art," and one must read this particular issue of "Poetry" aloud, to himself preferably, in order to drain the cup of ambrosia. Then perhaps, one will exclaim ecstatically with Hildegarde Flanner:

Their voices are as white
As altar candles. Their voices are
as gold as wheat
And clustered in the dark their words
are sweet
As ripened fruit.

* * * *

There is no loveliness I cannot see.
There is no wall too stern for me
There is no door that can withstand
The lifted symbol of my hand.

I know an ancient shibboleth
I pass, for I have talked with Death!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DUES PAID.

SANTA FE SOCIETY

Dr. J. H. Todd, E. C. Crampton, C. B. Cosgrove, Mrs. Chas. A. Spiess.

Associate Members.

Dr. Chas. A. Davlin,.

NEW MEXICO SOCIETY.

Ralph Pearson, Mrs. J. H. Heald, Mrs. J. T. Newhall, J. C. Cebrian, Emily C. Fergusson, Miss Clara H. White, John W. Force, Mrs. E. A. White, Mrs. F. M. Craven, Mrs. Jarvis Richards, Mrs. C. F. Wientge, Miss Eva Wientge, Venolo Marquis, Chas. G. Smith, Chas. A. Gianini, Herbert W. Yeo, Mrs. A. P. Hogle, Wm. Bruce, Rev. Robert R. Adams, Wm. O. Bates.

SOCIETIES AND SCHOOLS

American Science Association.

The annual financial report of The American Association for the Advancement of Science shows receipts during the past year of $13,096.05 and expenditures of $10,272.56, the invested funds of the Association amounting to $125,723.59.

GIFTS AND GRANTS

Endowment for Holyoke.

The faculty of Mount Holyoke College has voted to raise a fund of $100,000 to endow the president's chair in commemoration of twenty years of service of Mary E. Wooley as president of the College.

APPRECIATION

Replete with Interest.

"Am in receipt of Numbers 1, 2 and 3 of El Palacio and find it replete with interest of things connected with this constructive reconstruction of the ancient periods of Santa Fe history. I enclose a cut of the monument recently erected to the memory of Ann Rutledge 'beloved of Abraham Lincoln.'" Thus writes Mrs. F. M. Craven from Havana, Ill., "at the mouth of 'Spoon River' made classical (?) by Edgar Lee Masters."

"Your Perfect One."

Mrs. Branch Craige writes from El Paso, Texas: "A group of women in the El Paso College Club have become very much interested in the possibilities of starting a local museum. I have heard so much of your perfect one in Santa Fe. Would you send me what printed matter you have available with regard to the museum and tell me of its beginnings?"

Remarkable Museum.

From San Francisco comes the following written by Miss Ethelwyn Wing, club director, of the Delphian Clubs of California: "In our copies of Art and Archaeology we have read of the remarkable museum that has been established in New Mexico and of the Santa Fe Fiesta with its Indian ceremonies inaugurated under its auspices. Our clubs are studying the early explorations and discoveries of the Spaniards in the southwest and we would appreciate it if you could supply us some information regarding the founding and growth of this museum, which is accumulating the data and material concerning this important period."

Evon Z. Vogt, custodian of El Morro National Monument, writes: "Be sure to start me off with the first number of the more frequent 'El Palacio.' This seems like a good move to me and I do not want to miss a single number of this interesting paper."

From Mrs. W. T. Sedgewick comes the word: "I enjoy getting the little Museum magazine and feel that it forges a link all the while to that wonderful country in which you live."

Homer Grunn writes from Los Angeles: "I take pleasure in renewing my membership in your society. I miss the paper very much and trust that you will again send it to me."

MUSEUM EVENTS

Pecos Deeded to Museum.

The conveyance of the site upon which the ruins of the Pueblo of Pecos and the Mission are located, has been completed by the recording of a quit claim deed signed by His Grace, the Rt. Rev. Albert Daeger, Archbishop of Santa Fe. The site is included in a tract of land within the Pecos grant acquired by Mr. Harry W. Kelly of Las Vegas and the Gross Kelly Company. The Catholic Church also claimed a portion of the site as it does the ground of all the missions and churches. Through the interest and benevolence of Mr. Kelly, a transfer of the site to Archbishop J. B. Pitaval was arranged, with the understanding that the site should eventually be transferred to the Museum of New Mexico and the School of American Research. This has been consummated and the State has been given a park of exceptional interest not only to tourists but to every American. Historically, archaeologically and even scenically, the site is a superb heritage to the people of the commonwealth. The excavation of the site has progressed sufficiently under the direction of Dr. A. V. Kidder to disclose data that make Pecos the most interesting spot, perhaps, in all the United States. Add to this the extensive chronicles dealing with the pueblo beginning with Castaneda as far back as 1540, and it is apparent that historically, there is no other spot to compare with Pecos, which was occupied continuously, it now appears, for 1,200 and more years up to less than 90 years ago.